Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 03822 021404Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01
ITC-01 SP-02 USIA-06 AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00
COME-00 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 OIC-02 SIL-01
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UNCTAD, EWWT
SUBJECT: FIFTH UNCTAD INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY GROUP (IPG) CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 024300

1. SUMMARY: THE FRG AGREES COMPLETELY THAT ANY CONVENTION COMING FROM THE IPG MUST BE BASED ON PRIVATE LAW BUT BELIEVES IT IS PREMATURE TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL. FRG OFFICIALS SUGGEST THE US SHOULD AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE MARCH UN CONFERENCE IN HAMBURG AND THE B GROUP COORDINATION MEETING IN JUNE BEFORE OTHER STEPS ARE CONTEMPLATED. THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT IF THE US DID WITHDRAW FROM THE IPG, WEST GERMANY WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE, ON POLITICAL GROUNDS, WHETHER TO JOIN THE US OR REMAIN WITHIN THE IPG.

2. EMBOFF DISCUSSED QUESTIONS SET FORTH IN REFTEL WITH MAUE AND REINHARD GANTEN (JUSTICE MINISTRY OFFICIAL LEADING GERMAN IPG DELEGATION). GANTEN SAID IT IS PREMATURE TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY WITHDRAWING FROM THE
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PAGE 02 BONN 03822 021404Z

IPG AND STRESSED THAT THE US SHOULD AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON THE CARRIAGE OF GOODS BY SEA IN HAMBURG (MARCH 6-31). HE SAID THE HAMBURG CONFERENCE, CONVENED TO PASS A CIVIL CONVENTION ON MARITIME TRANSPORT, WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR AS TO WHETHER THE IPG COULD CONTINUE. IF THE HAMBURG MEETING FAILS TO AGREE UPON A CONVENTION THERE MIGHT BE GROUNDS TO

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

POSTPONE THE FALL IPG MEETING. IF THE CONVENTION IS PASSED, THERE IS GOOD REASON TO CONTINUE THE IPG IN THE FALL. HE EXPECTS THE CONFERENCE TO PASS THE CONVENTION.

3. GANTEN ALSO NOTED THAT ON JUNE 14-16 THE B GROUP OF THE UNCTAD IPG CONVENTION WOULD MEET IN PARIS SPECIFICALLY TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION; HE SUGGESTED THAT ANY FINAL US DECISION AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THIS PARIS MEETING.

4. GANTEN SAID THE FRG DOES NOT COMPLETELY AGREE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE IPG. HE POINTED OUT THAT ALL IPG DELEGATES ACCEPTED THE COMMON UNDERSTANDING SPELLING OUT THE CONTENTS OF THE FUTURE CONVENTION AND THAT GROUP B GAVE A STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT TO THIS UNDERSTANDING. GANTEN SAID THAT THE FRG WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED BY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE UNDERSTANDING, SINCE SO MANY DELEGATES COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO HAVE A SINGLE OPINION AND, IN ANY CASE, THE DIFFERENCES WERE NOT CRUCIAL. HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT THE IPG WAS BASING ITS WORK ON THE COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND THAT SLOW PROGRESS DID NOT NOW JUSTIFY WITHDRAWAL.

5. GANTEN DESCRIBED THE US AND FRG AS AGREEING ON
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THE MAJORITY OF CONVENTION GOALS, SAYING THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD SIMILAR ATTITUDES. GANTEN NOTED THAT HE WAS NOT STATING THAT THE FRG WOULD NOT BACK A US DESIRE TO WITHDRAW BUT FELT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO MAKE THIS DECISION. HE SAID THAT IF THE TIME CAME WHEN THE US CONSIDERED WITHDRAWAL, THE FRG WOULD HAVE TO LOOK AT THE POLITICAL REASONS INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING THE US OR REMAINING IN THE IPG.

6. GANTEN HOPED THERE WOULD BE US REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE IPG AT THE PARIS B GROUP MEETING.

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